

PRESS RELEASE

Congressman John Conyers, Jr.

**Fourteenth District, Michigan
Ranking Member, Committee on the Judiciary
Dean, Congressional Black Caucus**

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CONYERS ON 9/11 VICTIMS COMPENSATION FUND: "EXTEND DEADLINE"

Congressman John Conyers, Jr. (D-MI), Ranking Member of the House Judiciary Committee, issued the following statement upon his introduction of the "September 11th Victim Compensation Fund Extension Act of 2003," legislation that extends the deadline for filing a claim with the September 11 Victim Compensation Fund to December 31, 2004.

"The other day President Bush spoke about the need of all Americans to sacrifice, I only hope he wasn't referring to those Americans who lost loved ones on that tragic day exactly two years ago today. Certainly, they have already sacrificed enough.

With the current deadline rapidly approaching for applying for compensation from the Victims Fund it has become painfully clear that many families simply need more time to file their respective claims. According to the Department of Justice, thus far, just under a third of eligible families have applied to the Fund for compensation - only about 1,282 death claims and 1,050 injury claims have been filed.

In light of this sad reality, I believe it is more than appropriate to extend the deadline for filing applications to the Victims Fund to December 31, 2004 - an extension of just over a year. This extension would give grieving families additional time to mourn those who were lost and to overcome the emotional challenges of filing paperwork with the Victims Fund.

As the anniversary of the tragedy of September 11 approaches, victims' families have many burdens. They do not need this arbitrary deadline confronting them between September 11 and the year-end holidays. This is something we can and must do now for victims of September 11."

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